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Drouth Makes This Crop Worth More

In Dry Seasons Alfalfa Produces Bushels of Seed Instead of Tons of Hay

MINNESOTA alfalfa fields 18 and 20 years old have been described by Northwest Farmstead. Recently, a representative of this paper examined a patch of alfalfa 65 years old and gathered seed from some of the plants.

"We are standing on hallowed ground," said Prof. C. A. Zavitz of the great Canadian agricultural college at Guelph, Ontario, when he was told that from this little patch on the farm now owned by Ferdinand Thürk in Section 4, Laketown Township, in Carver County, Minn., originally came the seed of the variety known as Grimm.

Wendelin Grimm's "Ewiger Klee."

It was in 1857 that Wendelin Grimm came to America from Baden, Germany, bringing with him a small quantity of the seed of the plant which he called "Ewiger Klee," or everlasting clover. He planted it, as had been the custom at his former home, on a hillside, difficult to cultivate.

Became Acclimated.

Its early history is practically unknown. Perhaps a part of the plants died out. Perhaps all of the original ones are dead, though this is unlikely. At any rate, some of them survived the ensuing winters. The surviving plants formed seed. Wendelin Grimm planted a larger acreage. Perhaps a part of these plants died out. From those which withstood weather conditions, more seed was planted by Wendelin Grimm and his neighbors. Thus in a period of years, there gradually came to be a distinct variety, hardy under northern conditions.

Most of the farmers in the neighborhood did not notice any difference between this plant and the ordinary alfalfa, seed of which they were able to buy for a few cents a pound. But after a while, most of them began to realize that this plant was actually different; that, while alfalfa of ordinary varieties made a better stand and a finer appearance the first year or two perhaps, in a short time it was all dead, while the seed from that originating on the Grimm farm produced a truly everlasting clover.

"He Is In a Dry Place."

Wendelin Grimm came to realize this himself, and a story is told that at one time when a man from a considerable distance offered him less than his price of 50 cents a pound for a sack of the seed he had threshed with a flail, Wendelin hung it carefully back on a rafter in the granary, with the laconic remark, "He is in a dry place."

Years ago, A. W. Trow of Glenville was lecturing to a farmers' institute in Carver County. He showed a chart



Mr. and Mrs. Wendelin Grimm. From an old portrait in the possession of their daughter, Mrs. Hubert Kelzer, of Carver County, Minn.

giving the feeding value of various grains and grasses.

"Will Grow Only In Carver County."

"Why don't you give the value of alfalfa?" asked a farmer.

"We aim to make these institutes practical," replied Mr. Trow, "and there is only one county in Minnesota where alfalfa can be grown. That is Carver."

A. B. Lyman, of Excelsior, Minn., who used sometimes to be described as the only farmer who has ever been known to entirely corner a farm product (the seed of Grimm alfalfa) tells the story of his own enlightenment and of the origin of the knowledge that here was a different variety:

Mr. Lyman Speaks.

It was in 1880 that my father who, with his farming operations, raised



Ready for the Thresher.

The hay crop this year on the third cutting would have been rather short, but the seed spirals filled well on account of the scarcity of rain.

some nursery stock, put in some seed of alfalfa, having first seen it on the farm of Tobias Ottinger near Victoria, Carver County. Unfortunately, however, he purchased seed of ordinary alfalfa at the drug store. It came up beautifully and made a fine stand. The next spring, when the grass began to turn green, suddenly one day I asked my father:

"Why doesn't our alfalfa look green?"

I ran down to the alfalfa patch excitedly, and found upon examination that not a single plant had survived.

Later, as a young man, I went to teach school in Dahlgren Township. Often, the children, in their language exercises, would write such sentences as: "Chickens like everlasting clover," "Hogs do well on everlasting clover," etc.

And I found that the "Ewiger Klee" on the farms of Dahlgren Township was a permanent crop.

One time, as I drove home from my school, I took some of the alfalfa hay, and my father again became interested, and bought half a bushel of seed from Northrup & Braslin, a seed firm then in Minneapolis. It was sown and came up nicely. It survived the winter perfectly, and we cut three big hay crops. But the second spring, it, like our first planting, was all dead.

Soon after, I saw a man named Onasorg who had had a nice field. I asked him:

"How is your 'Ewiger Klee'?" supposing it had suffered the same fate as ours.

His answer was, "I lost me no one plant."

Kempke's Field Did Well.

This was on the spring of 1893. Again I went to teach school in a neighboring township. One day I was talking with a farmer named Bade. He pointed to a distant hillside.

"Do you see that fence?" he asked. "Yes."

"Do you see the beautiful green alfalfa on the left side of the fence?"

That is Kempke's field. Kempke and I planted alfalfa the same day, on land prepared exactly the same. Now Kempke's field is O. K. and mine is all gone."

By this time, having watched the everlasting clover for years, a light began to dawn upon me, and I said to him: "Where did you get your seed?"

"At the drug store," he said.

"And where did Kempke get his?"

"From Wendelin Grimm," he said.

And I remember then how Mr. Bade's face lighted up. He believed that he had found the solution of his problem, and I thought so, too.

Everlasting Clover At Last.

Not long after, in 1893, Christian Bender, on his farm near Chaska, threshed six bushels of alfalfa seed to the acre. My father bought some of



Minnesota Alfalfa 65 Years Old.

A. B. Lyman of Carver County, largely responsible for Grimm development, examining the patch originally sown by Wendelin Grimm.

that seed, planted it northeast of our dwelling, and it stood there 14 years before we plowed it up.

Sometime after that, I was attending some sort of a meeting at the Agricultural College, and in talking with Prof. Andrew Boss, I told him that down in Carver County there was a variety of alfalfa which was hardy in Minnesota; that I was convinced that it was the variety of seed and not soil or climate condition that made the difference. I remember how strongly impressed he was.

He replied: "Do you realize the importance of this discovery, if it is true?"

I answered: "Yes," though I suppose that until that moment I had not realized it.

Meantime, the farmer neighbors of Wendelin Grimm, some of them, were buying seed from him and from those who had planted his seed. Some were buying some seed of the Grimm variety and some from the drug store or the commercial seed house. In practically every case, the Grimm seed did well, surviving at least in part the severest winters, while the seed imported from elsewhere succumbed to ordinary winters. Folks had not really sensed the fact that here was a variety.

U. S. Department Sends Man.

From the Minnesota College of Agriculture, the news of this discovery went to Washington. And there was sent to Minnesota an expert investigator, Chas. J. Brand, later chief of the Bureau of Markets. He studied the question at length for months, tracing the origin of the seed of different fields all over the county, studying the habits of growth of the plant, the appearance of the seed, the color of the blossoms, and every other characteristic.

Indicating how little most of us really see was the answer to his question made by a farmer who had raised Grimm alfalfa for 20 years:

"What is the color of the blossoms?"

"They are all purple," he said.

Yet when he and Mr. Brand went out to the field, the owner was more astonished than his visitor to find that they were variegated, a characteristic of the Grimm variety.

Now farmers in Carver County will tell you that they always knew that this was a hardy variety and that others would fail. Doubtless, they think they always did know it. But the fact is that the actual discovery was made by scientific men from the University of Minnesota and the U. S. Department of Agriculture, guided by the suggestion of an observing country school teacher.

How this young school teacher cornered a large part of the supply of the seed of this valuable plant, the years of labor he put in on the wrong trail without return, how it took several years for a chance suggestion of W. M. Hays, assistant secretary of agriculture under James Wilson, to incubate in his mind and lay for him the foundation of a fortune are not parts of this story. Sufficient to say that after many years of fruitless effort trying to raise seed in commercial quantities in Minnesota, he gave it up and took what little seed he had, a few thousand pounds (which he could have sold at that time at \$1.00 a pound) and gave it free to men in an irrigated section of Idaho, under a contract to sell him at a set price every pound of seed that might ever be grown on the land they owned, even though they sold the land. The price was high enough to pay the producers well, low enough to give a very excellent resale profit to the man who had furnished the original seed.

Produces Seed Only Dry Years.

Mr. Lyman until recently had the larger part of his 200-acre farm in Carver County seeded down to alfalfa. He rented the place a few years ago and went to California to spend the winter. When he returned, the lessee had plowed up all but 65 acres of the alfalfa.

* * *

Alfalfa is not ordinarily a producer of seed as eastern Minnesota seasons are too wet on heavy soil with a clay subsoil, such as prevail in most of that vicinity. But this year, after the field had produced two good crops of hay, the weather turned very dry in-



The 58th Crop of Seed.

Albert Gerdson of Carver County shelling out seed from alfalfa which was sown during the Civil War.

All the farmers in the neighborhood, including the lessee on the Lyman farm, started to cut the third crop for hay. Mr. Lyman, however, had been watching it. He immediately offered the owner of the crop much more than its value in hay if he would bind it and stack it for seed. He jumped into his car and covered the entire neighborhood, buying all the seed produced on the fields which he knew to have originated on the Grimm place.

This, of course, is a very unusual year. It was the attempt to raise seed under the humid conditions in Minnesota that kept back the spread of Grimm alfalfa for many years. It is only in very exceptional years that on this heavy soil in Carver County alfalfa will yield two or three bushels of seed to the acre, worth, according to the crop year and the demand, from 35 cents to \$1.00 a pound.

The fact is, there is little territory that will produce alfalfa seed in any considerable quantity year after year. There is in North Dakota an association of men who have real certified Grimm alfalfa seed. They are producing seed pretty regularly. On the irrigated farms owned and leased by Mr. Lyman in Idaho, seed is produced year after year. Many scattered farms which are not in any organization produce Grimm seed regularly.

And that brings us to the point of this story. Northwest Farmstead has told in previous issues of the growing of alfalfa on sandy cut-over soils in Minnesota. This paper has expressed its conviction that the spreading of lime where needed on those sandy soils and the planting of hardy, northern strains of alfalfa will spell prosperity where now in too many cases is poverty.

This has been the advice of Northwest Farmstead. To this there should be added: The sandy soils, with their permeable sub-soils, probably will produce seed, if not every year, then at least much more often than most other soils in Minnesota. It will pay a sandy soil farmer, perhaps pay him big, if he will watch his alfalfa throughout the season and when it gives promise of producing a seed crop, let it stand, and if the spirals fill, cut it with a binder regardless of whether it is in the first or second crop. A single good crop of seed may more than pay for the farm.

To Poultry Editor Northwest Farmstead: I am enclosing my card so

To Northwest Farmstead: When is the best time to hatch chickens for broilers? When is the best time to hatch chickens for pullets, or winter layers, and to sell by the pound in the fall?

Our chicken house is 14x24 feet and we have a dirt floor for our scratching pen. The dirt seems to make the straw damp. Would it be all right to put 3 or 4 inches of coal ashes and cinders on the floor and put the litter on this?—T. R., Sherburne Co., Minn.

The best time to hatch broilers is about two months in advance of whatever period you find most advisable to market them. For instance, if you can locate a good market for the middle of May, your broilers should be hatched about the middle of March. As a rule, the best broiler prices are obtained early in the season, from March on up to the middle of July. After July the prices fluctuate and become considerably lower, owing to increased supply.

I believe that it is more profitable to raise and market broilers on a good broiler market than it is to hold these same chickens until fall. Last year White Leghorn broilers were sold in May at 65 cents a pound. These broilers, weighing 2 pounds, brought \$1.30 each. I also know of a case where Buff Orpingtons were sold at 65 cents a pound at 2½ pounds weight. These same cockerels, held until fall and sold at 4 to 7 pounds, would go on the market at from 18 to 20 cents. The same principle applies to select-

As to your poultry house floor being damp, the cause may be that the dirt which you used for the floor was put into the poultry house late in the fall when it was wet. An ideal floor for a poultry house is elevated at least 8 inches above the outside ground elevation, and is made by first placing a layer of crushed or cracked rock, cinders or cobble stone, over which a layer of 6 inches of good stiff loam is spread. This should be tamped down thoroughly, and in time will wear hard and smooth. It is advisable to cover the surface with about an inch of dry sand.

To Northwest Farmstead: My chickens cough and sneeze, and some of them act as though something is in their throats. Please tell me what to do.—Mrs. J. P., Renville Co., Minn.

Your flock is troubled with roup and possibly canker. Secure a good roup remedy from your local druggist. Should you find any cankers in the mouth or throat, it will be necessary to make application of a strong disinfectant such as creolin, applying it with a small swab after you have removed the cankers. It is very hard to remedy a canker condition when once it gets hold.

Another good remedy for these colds, or the first stages of roup, is to clean the fowl's nostrils of the mucus accumulation and then apply kerosene by using a small machine oil can, forcing a dose into each nostril and a little into the roof of the mouth. Two applications of kerosene have cured these bad colds.

ESTABLISHED in 1910 (but taking over and succeeding an old-established publication), Northwest Farmstead has made wonderful progress, particularly the last three years. Definite projects inaugurated by Northwest Farmstead for the betterment of northwestern farm conditions, and particularly for Minnesota as a whole, are many and varied.

Northwest Farmstead was the first to recognize the wonderful possibilities of northern Minnesota as a diversified farming section.

Northwest Farmstead developed methods for the proper, economical, progressive and profitable reclaiming of Minnesota's idle and non-producing cut-over lands.

Northwest Farmstead was first to recognize the magnitude and importance of the dairy industry in Minnesota, and is credited with having made it possible to bring the National Dairy Show to Minnesota in 1921—and again in 1922.

Northwest Farmstead was the first to recognize the possibilities of the poultry industry in Minnesota, and has done more to develop and increase interest in it than all other forces combined.

Northwest Farmstead has a nationally-known Poultry Expert (W. E. Stanfield) in its exclusive service. So far as the writer knows, no other farm paper is so equipped.

Northwest Farmstead was the first farm paper—and probably the first of any kind—to take up the battle against "Pittsburgh Plus"—the practice of charging freight costs from Pittsburgh on all steel, no matter where manufactured or shipped from.

Northwest Farmstead was the first farm paper—and one of the first publications of any kind—to urge the construction of the Great Lakes Water-

way—bringing the Atlantic to Minnesota.

Northwest Farmstead was the first farm paper to recognize the possibilities of "Fur Farming" and to encour-

to Duluth at even lower prices; marl beds, perhaps on your own farm, how to find them and apply the marl; the waste from the marble cutting industry; limestone waste from sugar

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age its development in the northwest.

But enough—although the foregoing are only a few of Northwest Farmstead's activities, pushed through the columns of the paper and in many other ways.

Northwest Farmstead is the only farm paper which has followed with care and presented fully to its readers the work of Dr. F. J. Alway in his experiments on sandy soil at Coon Creek, Anoka County; at Bemidji, Beltrami County; Brainerd, Crow Wing County, and elsewhere on individual farms throughout the cut-over section. In its issue of July 15, 1922, the cover page and all of two more pages, 331 and 332, were devoted to this subject under the heading, "Lime Means Life to Alfalfa."

More alfalfa articles are coming. Northwest Farmstead has in process of preparation several other articles on the same subject. Sources of lime will be pointed out; ground limestone from quarries in Minnesota and by lake steamers from eastern points

factories such as the one at Chaska; rate of seeding alfalfa, depth of seeding, varieties of seed, preparation of seedbed, time to mow; how to feed to cattle, horses, hogs, sheep and poultry,

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